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INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1257  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7550  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8668  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1510  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9312  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
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SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER KHAN STILL HAS FOREIGN RELATION  
PLANS

Classified By: Ambassador Patricia A. Butenis; Reason 1.4(d)

11. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Khan requested a meeting with Secretary Rice during the time he would be in the United States, outlined his views to improve relations with India, and confirmed that Bangladesh hopes to open an embassy in Afghanistan by the end of the year. End Summary.

12. (C) On 4 September, Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Morshed Khan prior to his travel to the Non Aligned Movement conference and to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting.

13. (C) Khan said he would like to meet with Secretary Rice either in New York at the UNGA or in Washington on 16 and 17 September, and 27, 28 and 29 September respectively. He said in his travels he has picked up on "some raw feelings" on a number of issues that he wanted to convey to Secretary Rice, mentioning Iran and thoughts from Non-Arab Middle Eastern countries. He said he wanted to talk about Lebanon in a meaningful way, that Lebanon can do more about Hezbollah, but "we are critical about the other side as well."

14. (C) We need to improve relations with our neighboring country, India, Khan said. "India has fewer concerns about its eastern border compared to its concerns about its western border," he said. To improve relations, we wanted to encourage investment such as the TATA project, so it was sad that the project has been delayed. Asked about the seemingly growing anti-business climate in Bangladesh, Khan said, "It takes a long time to regain business confidence. To do this we need a comprehensive approach but it's difficult when India accuses us of having terrorist camps but never responds to our requests for proof."

15. (C) Khan said that one needs to look at North-East India with a different eye. Where Bangladesh might see themselves as being nine-tenths surrounded by India, from an Indian perspective, at least in their North-East, India is largely surrounded by Bangladesh. Bangladesh would like to have improved relations with West Bengal, but that is not on New Delhi's agenda, he said. We have tried to improve relations by providing double-entry visas to Indians as they transit through Bangladesh on their way to India, but Bangladesh has not gotten anything in return. For example, Bangladesh would like to have Nepalese trucks be able to transit India on their way to Bangladesh, would like direct Dhaka to Calcutta bus service, and would like for the Indians to improve their side of the Benapole roads as we have done. "We both need a better relationship to grow," he said.

16. (C) Khan confirmed that Bangladesh plans to open an embassy in Kabul. He said that Bangladesh has not identified a site yet, but has looked at several properties, and would like to open up their mission within the year. Afghanistan's recent entry into SAARC was the deciding factor in the BDG's decision.

BUTENIS